

## Quick Tips

- If you're doing a gardening project with students this spring, have them use a digital camera to document plant growth.
- Students participating in stock market simulations can use *Quicken* (already installed on all MLTI laptops) to keep track of their investments.

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## April is the cruelest month...

...or so says T.S. Eliot. So far, weather-wise, it *has* been cruel but April is also National Poetry Month so we have a poem for you:

*Roses are red  
Violets are blue  
High school kids  
Need laptops too!*

## Compelling Testimony

On April 5 we attended a public hearing before the Legislature's Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. The topic was expansion of MLTI into Maine's high schools and it attracted a "standing room only" crowd of educators, business people, parents and students.

After a presentation by Commissioner Susan Gendron, the committee invited people who were in favor of proposal to speak. We heard from Superintendents who feel that a way must be found to guarantee that this initiative moves on to the high school. We heard from community members and parents who have seen first-hand the difference this initiative is making in students' lives and how much promise it holds for the future.



After the arguments were made against the proposal and those who were neither for nor against had their turn to speak, the remainder of the time was given to others who had come to talk about how important MLTI has been to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in Maine and how much these students need to have these tools in high school.

Some of the most compelling testimony came from students themselves. They spoke about the resources the laptops allowed them instant access to and how everyone in class can work on projects at any time, not just when the teacher can sign up for lab time.

One very powerful speaker was teacher Ernie Easter from New Sweden. Ernie's described how students in this small rural town in Aroostook County now make virtual field trips to art museums around the world and use their iBooks to communicate with students in other parts of the state. His students also used their iBooks to write their own testimony, copies of which he presented to the members of the committee. Please visit *MaineLearns* to read Ernie's complete testimony.

# The Maine Student Web Design Awards

April 16 is the deadline for the Maine Student Web Design Competition and we hope some middle school students took advantage of their iBooks to produce some exciting Web sites.

The awards ceremony for this contest will be held on Saturday, May 15 at 1 pm. at the studios of Maine's WB51 in Westbrook and Governor John Baldacci will be the featured



speaker. If you and your students are planning to attend, RSVP as soon as possible to [info@mswda.org](mailto:info@mswda.org) or call 442-9006 and ask for Melissa.

For more information and to view this year's entries, visit

the Maine Student Web Design Awards website at <http://www.mswda.org>.



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## Family Heirlooms at RLRS

Most families have heirlooms that they pass down through the generations. Sometimes they are displayed proudly and sometimes they remained tucked away in the attic or the basement. Often the story behind that item is lost as the original owners are no longer with us to tell us all about it.

7<sup>th</sup> graders at Rangeley Lakes Regional School have been involved in a project where they learn the stories behind their family heirlooms and write those stories for publication. They took digital photos of the heirlooms,

interviewed family members, did some Web research, and wrote the stories using their MLTI laptops.



*Crescent moon dish  
c.1870*

The students then learned to make Web pages so they could post their pictures and stories on their school website. Their teacher, Sherry Connally reports that the project was successful in helping students learn more about their families and posting work to the Web gives students a real audience for their writing. Read more about this project on *MaineLearns*.



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## National Poetry Month

April is National Poetry Month. Although much of the month will have passed by the time you read this, it's still not too late to celebrate. National Poetry Month is sponsored by the Academy of American Poets and was first celebrated in 1996. The goal of the Academy was to promote the teaching of poetry in our schools and to celebrate the role of poetry in our culture.

Many middle school teachers are finding that the iBooks are valuable tools for students in their

poetry studies. Students can use their iBooks for reading, writing and reciting poetry. They can also use them to produce multimedia publications of poetry collections.

If you would like some ideas for using the iBooks to study poetry or just need some good resources, read Barbara's article in the FAQ section of *MaineLearns*. It answers the question, "How can our iBooks help us celebrate National Poetry Month?" but we hope you'll refer to it anytime you get the urge to "keep a poem in your pocket."



[Click on FAQ](#)

## New Sweden Students as Teachers

One thing that many MLTI teachers have discovered is how much they can learn from their students. In New Sweden, members of the community are also learning how effective 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders can be as teachers.

Several students accompanied their teacher, Ernie Easter, to our January iTeam Conference in Gorham. The conference inspired them to go back to their school and community and share some of their technical skills and creative ideas with others.

They lead an in-service session for teachers on how to use iPhoto in the classroom. They not only shared their iPhoto projects

but also helped teachers learn to use the program in a hands-on workshop.

Community members also had an opportunity to learn from the students when they did an interactive demonstration for the Union's annual Education Night.



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## Unlocking the Clubhouse

One of the primary beliefs of MLTI is that technology access and the opportunities it affords must be equitable. It has long been known that a technology gender gap exists. *Unlocking the Clubhouse – Bridging the Gender Gap for Girls and Women in Computing* is a conference to be held on May 7 at USM's Albert Brenner Glickman Family Library in Portland.

This conference is for all middle school or high school teachers who are interested in learning more about the gender gap in technology and discussing ways to take advantage of MLTI and one-to-one computing to ensure that girls gain the skills they need and have the same opportunities as boys. Find out more by downloading a brochure from *MaineLearns*.



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## PRISM 2004

Acadia University will once again host the PRISM (Pioneering Resource Integration in the State of Maine) program this summer. Sponsored by the Libra Foundation, this is an opportunity for teams of teachers and students to develop a community-based project and learn new technology skills at Acadia's beautiful Wolfville, Nova Scotia campus. Dates for this year's program are July 25-30.

A team consists of two teachers and two students who will work together on campus, all expenses paid, to develop a community-based project and a website to showcase that project.

The teams will work with the AITT (Acadia Institute for Teaching and Technology) staff to learn the skills they need to build the website and carry out the project. Teams will continue to communicate with and receive support from AITT when they return to school in the fall and complete their project.

The deadline for applying for this year's PRISM program is Friday, May 21. Participants will be notified of their acceptance by May 28. Applications for the program can be found at <http://aitt.acadiau.ca/prism/program.html>



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## MLTI Update

**Published Monthly  
by the MLTI Staff**

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**Read MLTI Update online!**

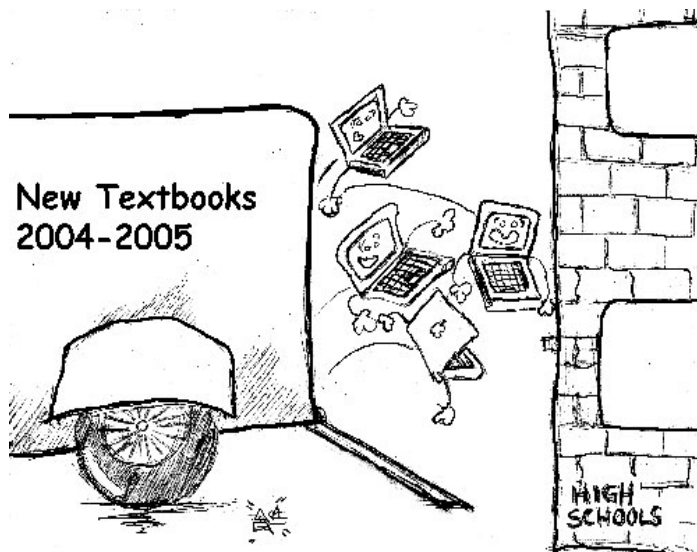
<http://www.mainelearns.org>



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## Kudos to...

... **Lisa Hogan** of Mt. Ararat Middle School for leading her colleagues in an effort to create electronic workbooks for students to use with *DataStudio*.



## Quote of the Month

"Truly creative and intellectual work requires freedom and a respect for privacy. Quality work needs sufficient time to think, to experiment, to play. The laptop can only become an extension of the child when it is available at all times."

*Gary Stager*

Stager, Gary. "Reinventing the Slate." *District Administration* March 2003. 12 Apr 2004 <<http://www.districtadministration.com/page.cfm?p=316>>

## Barbara's and Kelly's Favorites

This month **Kelly** shares three of her favorites:

First is *Developing Student Electronic Portfolios*  
<http://members.shaw.ca/dbrear/dseportfolios.html>

Whether you are using portfolios already or just thinking about it, this website is full of great links to resources on creating and digitizing student portfolios with many any educational applications.

Next is *CIESE Online Classroom Projects* found at <http://k12science.ati.stevens-tech.edu/currichome.html>. Are you looking for something to engage kids at the end of the year? Try these interactive, online projects that utilize real data, primary sources, and people. Some have

specific start dates while others are ongoing and allow you to participate at any time.

Kelly's third favorite is *The ABCs of Web Site Evaluation*. Point your browser to <http://kathyschrock.com/abceval/index.htm> Information literacy is crucial part of our students' education. This Kathy Schrock site has lessons, handouts, and web pages that help students understand the importance of knowing their source of information.

**Next Month: Barbara's Favorites.**